TOWARD AN ACTION PLAN FOR FUTURE RESEARCH: ADVANCING THE ARTS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

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On July 31, 2016, the Kennedy Center’s Office of VSA and Accessibility, in collaboration with the Center’s Research & Evaluation Division, convened a select group of researchers and academics to devise a 5-year plan for advancing the field of the arts and special education through research. Out of those conversations, recommendations about research trajectories were prepared for a larger group that included practitioners, administrators. This larger group met on September 17th, and laid the groundwork for a white paper that will be submitted for publication later this year. This session will summarize the group’s recommendations, providing a framework for thinking about the relationship between research and practice. This session will encourage educators to think about their role in building a critical body of literature—thereby building the collective capacity of our field to best reach students with disabilities in and through the arts.
Introduce yourself! Share your name, the organization you’re representing here, and how you consume research:

- Usable knowledge pieces
- White papers/Executive Summaries
- Studies published in peer-reviewed journals
The Office of VSA and Accessibility, a Jean Kennedy Smith Arts and Disability program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, is dedicated to providing opportunities for people with disabilities, of all ages, across the globe, to learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts.

- VSA Playwright Discovery
- VSA International Children’s Art Program
- VSA International Young Soloists
- VSA Emerging Young Artists
- VSA Contracts
- Rosemary Kennedy Initiatives
- VSA International Network
- Accessibility
- LEAD Conference
- Technical Assistance

- VSA Intersections Conference
- Powerful Arts Education
Examining in the Intersection of the Arts Education and Special Education: A National Forum (Kennedy Center, 2012)

“...there is a need to shift from the current national emphasis on short-term program evaluation to **more long-term research**”

There is a need ...”to **develop and test new research methodologies** which are more compatible with inquiry in arts education and special education.”

There is a need ...”to explore the development of **more targeted research questions** that focus on the arts and learning for all students, including those with disabilities.”
Documented lack of information supporting critical inquiry in this work (Gerber & Horoschak, 2012)

Graduate Students had difficulty:
- Finding **peer reviewed articles** from recent years
- Finding information on **specific topics** involving art and special education

Graduate Students called for:
- A **databank of reputable articles** relevant to arts and special education
- Resources practitioners can use to **link their work to research**
AN ACTION PLAN

Helps researchers connect their work to policy;

Makes research more readily available to research, practice and policy communities;

Helps emerging researchers match questions to methods and studies to previous studies;

Disseminates research by linking to other disciplines;

Supports evidence-based practice.
JULY 31ST CONVENING

Keynote on Research Trajectories—James Catterall

Thought Leader Pecha Kuchas, followed by group discussion
   Alida Anderson
   Rob Horowitz
   Karen Keifer-Boyd
   Scott Jones

Envisioning the Action Plan—Gail Burnaford and James Catterall
How will we account for the convergence of research, practice, and policy, with an eye towards generating usable knowledge?

Who are the giants whose work informs our field and the research questions we pursue?

How will we account for mixed methodologies that include both qualitative and quantitative data?

Who participates in the generation of research questions and knowledge production?

If our group recommends publishing a journal or maintaining a database, what would be the scope of its work, and what criteria would be used to decide inclusion?
Arenas—the what of research
Methods—the how of research
Dissemination—the effect of research
Generation—the creation of research
THE CYCLE OF RESEARCH

Communities: Generation

Research Arenas

Communities: Dissemination

Research Methodologies
Access
• Do students with disabilities have equal/any access to arts learning (in and through the arts)?
• What do special educators know about arts education? What do arts educators know about special education?

Innovation
• What pedagogies show promise in arts education/arts integration for students with disabilities? How will they inform the building and testing of new best-practice models?
• What do we know about effective teacher PD that can inform the design of teacher prep and professional learning in this area?

Efficacy
• What kinds of instructional strategies and classroom conditions support learning for students with disabilities?
• Which instructional strategies and classroom conditions work for whom?
Affirm a need for a mixed-methods approach that maps to the What Works Clearinghouse Research Types (IES, 2013)

Access
Studies contribute to “core knowledge”
- Type #1: Foundational Research
- Type #2: Early-Stage or Exploratory Research

Innovation
Studies draw on existing evidence to develop new interventions
- Type #3: Design and Development Research

Efficacy
Studies generate evidence of impact
- Type #4: Efficacy Research
- Type #5: Effectiveness Research
- Type #6: Scale-up Research
Underscore a commitment to research that impacts classroom practice, affects policy, and continues the research cycle.

Community includes practitioners, administrators, researchers, doctoral students, and students/individuals with disabilities.

Dissemination Tactics:
- Usable knowledge
- White papers
- Journals or database
Underscore a commitment to research that impacts classroom practice, affects policy, and continues the research cycle.

Community includes practitioners, administrators, researchers, doctoral students, and students/individuals with disabilities.

Generation Tactics:
- Inviting the next generation of researchers and practitioners
- Research fellowships
- Prestigious publications
- Participatory research with communities
Where do you see yourself or the teachers and students you support in this plan?

What do you see as the challenges in implementing research-based practice (or framing your current work within a research context) in the classrooms you support?

What supports and affirmations do you need from this plan?


VSA Intersections: Arts and Special Education Conference  
August 6-7, 2017 in Austin, TX

Webinar Series
The Teacher and the Teaching Artist: Collaboration and Community Building in the Classroom  
October 11, 4:00pm – 5:00pm EST
Teaching Students with Autism: What Teaching Theater Teaches Us  
Voices from the Field: November 1, 8, 15, and 29, 12:30pm – 12:45pm EST
Arts As Inclusion: Holding Ourselves Accountable in Reaching Students with Disabilities  
December 13, 3:00 – 4:00pm EST

Published Resources
Professional Papers
Teacher Guides

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